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COMMUNITY SERVICE NEWSLETTER

COMMUNITY SERVICE NEWSLETTER is published six times a year by Community Service, Inc. Our purpose is to promote the small community as a basic social institution involving organic units of economic, social and spiritual development.

consensus and democracy

by Kirkpatrick Sale

The following are excerpts from "The Importance of Size: Democracy," chapter seven of a recently published book entitled HUMAN SCALE, which was written by Kirkpatrick Sale, a member of Community Service. HUMAN SCALE was published by Coward, McCann and Gehegan Publishers, 200 Madison Avenue, New York, in June of this year.

Democracy means the direct one-person-one-vote popular assembly of every citizen. It does not mean the bill of rights freedoms, it does not mean republican government, it does not mean federalism or pluralism. Above all, it does not mean representation: representative government may be a desirable expedient in a government of great size, but as we have clearly seen it has nothing to do with citizen participation, popular decision-making, or democracy. The only true democracy is a direct democracy.

Many disparate types of theorists have analyzed the nature of democratic government, but virtually all are agreed on one point: a true democracy requires a small society. The human mind is limited, the human voice finite; the number of people who can be gathered together in one place is restricted, the time and attention they are capable of giving is bounded. From simply a human regard there is a limit to the number of people who can be expected to know all of the civic issues, all of the contending opinions, all of the candidates for office.

Dahl and Tufte offer evidence from what they call "the largest and most careful study bearing on

the relation of size to democracy" ever undertaken, a \$1-million survey by the Local Government Research Group of Sweden and the departments of five Swedish universities from 1966 to 1970. In a close examination of the populations of thirty-six different-sized localities carefully selected to elicit the maximum information about citizen political participation and feelings of power, the group found that political awareness, political discussion, membership in political and voluntary organizations, and involvement in local government was far greater in units under 8,000 people than in any larger sizes. As Dahl and Tufte say, with some italicized astonishment, "The major finding of the study is that in Sweden the values of participation and effectiveness are best achieved in densely populated communes with populations under 8,000."

Even a democracy at its optimum size can have its problems, however, and it seems pertinent to confront the two most common: that it tends to operate with either-or voting systems which do not represent accurately the true popular will, and that it thus tends to promote factionalism, especially of the majority against the minority. The problem lies, however, not with democracy, but in the method of decision-making.

The famous "voting paradox," first formulated by the Marquis de Condorcet in the 18th century, shows that majority-rule voting in fact has no necessary relation to the actual preferences of the majority of the voters. In one form we see it in the Presidential pair-wise elections, as

The same sort of thing is often seen, too, in legislation, where a bill will pass or fail depending solely on the order in which the amendments to it are considered; indeed, it is possible to arrive at any one of three different outcomes depending purely on what part is up for a vote at what time, which pretty much plays havoc with "will of the people." In schematic form, the paradox looks like this:

Therefore any outcome is possible, theoretically representing the "majority will," depending merely upon the order of the vote.

matters, creating divisions that can move into social affairs as well.

The process of consensus is nearly as important as its result. The emphasis is on a search for agreement rather than as in majoritarian assemblies the clarity of divisions, on compromise and cooperation, that is, rather than maneuvering and competition. In order to try to get a whole meeting over to your position, it will not help to score debating points or ignore opponent's criticisms, and if you want to get out before dawn it is best to work out some arrangement with the other points of view rather than simply solidify your own. As often as not the compromise, because it is a synthesis of a number of positions, turns out to be stronger and more durable than any original position, as iron gains strength when manganese and tungsten and carbon are added in the process of making steel. And because it has the assent of all the people who will be affected by it, it stands a better chance of commanding obedience and being implemented the day after.



It is, self-evidently, a process that is not without problems. It relies upon a certain common understanding, a shared commitment. It works only when the group begins with some points of unity, in religion, geography, purpose, or philosophy, and best with all of these. It demands more time than up-and-down voting, more time in give-and-take, than most people are used to spending. It may not work in emergencies--though the story of the Quaker ships' journey to Vietnam tends to belie that--and it may mean delaying actions for weeks until differences can be reconciled. It depends upon some minimal participation from everyone, even the wallflowers not used to unburdening themselves in public gatherings. It requires a certain forbearance on the part of the meeting toward the individual dissenter who refuses to go along, just as it does a certain temerity on the part of the dissenter before opposing the meeting. And ultimately it means that the perpetual dissenters must recognize it is in the interests of everyone for them to leave the community with which they are at such odds and go and find somewhere a more congenial one.

Impossible, you say? Too demanding for real life? Evidently, not so.

Quaker meetings for at least the past 300 years have operated by consensus, not only in local meetings from a dozen to several hundred, but in state and regional meetings where as many as a thousand might gather. Some of the Northeast American Indian tribes, certain Chinese and Japanese communities, and the villages of pre-colonial Java used to use consensus.

A great many contemporary "alternative" groups--communes, typically, intentional communities, co-ops, political organizations--have also attempted consensus government, with greater or lesser success depending upon their prior degree of agreement. Lew Bowers, a skilled and sensitive "facilitator" of many hundreds of consensual meetings, believes that the process is easily assimilable into any group with shared interests that numbers as many as thirty or even fifty, but is skeptical about unanimity over that number. The Movement for a New Society, a federation of a dozen or so activist groups around the country, similarly recommends (and uses) consensus for small groups, although in at least one instance some of its members were successful on a larger scale: when 700 anti-nuclear protestors being held in an armory were asked to come up with a unified policy on bail-or-jail, MNS coordinators got the crowd to

break into about sixty small groups, each of which thrashed out a consensus and then (the center shuffled the various consensuses back and forth,) sent word to a central point, and within two hours they had all agreed on a decision.

Consensus is a form, indeed, that might apply to a larger community of 8,000 to 10,000 people. Neighborhoods of say, 500 or 1,000 people, asked to decide on some community-wide issue, could achieve consensus in an open popular assembly much as the New England towns once did and then send a delegate--not a "representative" with an independent vote but merely a "spoke" to convey this consensus--to a community coordinating body. This body with a workable size of a dozen or so (above the ideal of five, it is true, but with never more than twenty in a community of 10,000 divided into neighborhoods of 500 each) could then harmonize the various neighborhood positions, easily referring back to neighborhood assemblies or committees where necessary, and then act as a kind of secretariat in carrying out the agreed-upon actions. This is a process of some complexity, to be sure, and each community would need to develop its own styles, but what we know of political affairs suggests that most aspects of governance are simpler at these levels--communications are easier, information is more readily and reliably gathered, feedback faster and more reliable, participation is greater, personalities and competences are known, and agreements more easily reached. Perhaps best of all, there are no fixed hierarchies here, no presidents or legislators or parliaments, no grand windblown institutions beyond the citizens' control, no roles of such complexity and specialization that they cannot be filled by practically any citizen; which is not to say that there could not be "leaders," people whose intelligence or experience gives them special stature within their neighborhood. Indeed, one would expect and welcome such people, but only that there is no statutory sanction, no official power, given to such figures, and therefore no abuse of it.

It is easy enough to prove that small size is a necessary condition for the proper functioning of a direct democracy--even more for a consensual one--but could it also be a sufficient condition?

In truth, I do not think it would really be necessary for a harmonious world that every community be a democracy, if only it remained of

human-scale proportions. I could imagine each community going for its own singular form of governance--some might choose a republic, others a monarchy, some might want an oligarchy to rule, others an elected triumvirate, some may prefer a socialist dictatorship, others a co-operative federation, and only a few of the finest and most harmonious opt for a consensual democracy--and as long as none of them tried to impose upon the other, the conditions for a stable, ecological world would be met. As long as the citizens of each had a free right in the choice of government and the free right to leave the community if that government palled, then the conditions of justice and freedom would be met. The essential underpinning of a sound and stable society, I am convinced, is the community which is built to the human scale in all its proportions and cleaves to the human scale in all its institutions, not necessarily one which is democratic.

And yet to my reading, history and logic both argue that a small community will tend toward the democratic whether or not it expresses it formally, simply by virtue of the fact that individuals are known to each other, interaction is common and regular, opinions are freely exchanged, and every ruler is also a neighbor. In a small society even the prince will probably be accessible and every parliament familiar; where the government is inherently limited in scope and accumulation, it is extremely difficult for any individual or set of individuals to dominate and overpower the populace at large and extremely unlikely that the citizens will permit them.



A community that wanted to be sure it knew what all its people were thinking, what the gripes and problems were, that wanted to hammer out the best solutions to the difficulties as they arose and wanted to be sure its suggestions were carried out and its regulations obeyed, would inevitably work toward some form of direct democracy. Likewise a community that wanted to create the maximum participation in the political process so as to give outlet for grumbling and dissension, that wanted to develop feelings of self-worth and effectiveness for the citizens' own psychic health, that wanted to insure loyalty and cooperation through common

understanding of the political machinery rather than through coercion, would instinctively move toward some kind of participatory democracy. Healthy not only for the individuals in it but for the community itself, democracy would be likely to come to the fore in any rational community kept at a manageable size, no matter what its trappings might look like.

Comments on Consensus

by Griscom Morgan

There is another aspect of consensus and participatory democracy exemplified by the practice of Arthur Morgan. By one approach it restricts action and options and obstructs innovation. By another approach it can do the opposite. If we believe that each person is a potential contributor toward a final concept and action of which no one person or few could adequately conceive, then the harmonious interaction and participation of all will enable them to evolve an idea or project that is beyond the potential of the one or the few.

Arthur Morgan worked on this assumption and used his power and insight to bring about this kind of interaction and outcome. When the ideas had matured and developed, they were far different from any that had been initially conceived. The very aid, discipline and management of this consensual creativity was an art, an accomplishment that was liberating like the capacity of the able orchestra conductor to bring about the playing together of musicians, each of whom has a different contribution to make.

Not everyone has this capacity to "conduct", to help the consensual process. This capacity and its development are very important to democracy. It can liberate people from being bound to old patterns, from being isolated in their own small perspectives.

Walter Anderson, a man who had lived and worked at Antioch College with this tradition as it developed under Arthur Morgan, remarked on it as a wonderful social value which he had not seen or experienced elsewhere in his wide experience. It is a culture even more than a system, based on the fact that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, but it requires an organic interrelationship and participation of all the parts in terms of the whole.

Dimensions of Reality

by Roger Peace

Don Hollister's article, "Social Balance," in the November-December 1979 NEWSLETTER was excellent. For sometime now, I have been thinking along similar lines, and this is an opportunity to put some of these thoughts on paper. Much of what I have to say is in agreement with the essential points Don brought out, but the dimensions of reality are further distinguished and elaborated.

First of all, it seems to me that Don is dealing with metaphysics (the nature of reality) more than with "social balance." The latter brings to my mind the proper balance between individual freedom/privacy and community belonging/social conformity. Metaphysics, on the other hand, refers to a balanced functioning or interaction of various dimensions of reality.

What are these dimensions?

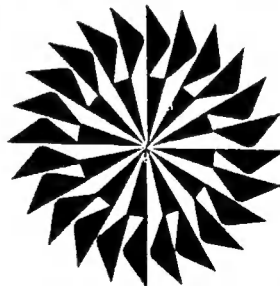
The three dimensions of reality--nature, humanity, and ideas--are all centered in the Spirit. The spiritual dynamic is expressed through each of these, not just through ideas. In nature, it is Life; in human society, Love; in ideas, Truth. Inasmuch as we learn to receive and express the Spirit within each dimension, so we grow as spiritual beings.

In practical terms, this means (1) caring for the earth and its inhabitants and creating environments which are in harmony with nature; (2) creating communities where human bonds and trust are cultivated as well as sharing of work and wealth; (3) an open search for truth and understanding rather than dogmatic allegiance to a national or religious ideology.

There is a corollary to the objective dimensions described here on the subjective or personal level: the natural world is equivalent to our physical bodies, the social world to our emotional feelings, the symbolic world to our mental thoughts, and the spiritual center to our souls. The spiritual attributes of Life, Love and Truth are equivalent to health, happiness, and understanding on the personal level.

These primary dimensions of reality can be broken down further in order to give us a more accurate picture of reality. Think of the three primary dimensions as the primary colors--red,

yellow and blue--which can be mixed together to form three integrated colors--orange, green, and purple. Thus, between nature (ecology) and humanity (culture) we get economics, the means by which we obtain our material needs. Between humanity (culture) and symbolism (ideology) we get politics, which codifies our values and ideals into laws and policies. Between symbolism (ideology) and nature (ecology) we get astrology and religion, which gives us our holistic understanding and brings us into harmony with all of life's creations.



The next thing to look at is the dynamic flow of energy between these levels. There are two directions in which energy moves--upward from the material base and downward from the spiritual center. The material base begins with the astronomical/elemental forces and the ecological life-supporting systems on our planet. From these we derive our economic necessities. Economics in turn affects social relations, or as Marx said, the means of production affect the relations of production and upon these the (political/ideological/religious) superstructure is built. Marx's view that ideology and religion were facades to rationalize the power-elite's domination--only attests to the influence that the organization of society has on these higher levels; yet I don't believe that their perversion negates their essential value or worth.

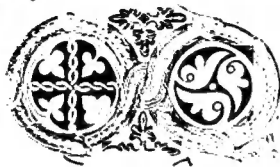
There is another flow of energy moving from spirit to matter. This flow is analogous to the night or dream energy, while the material flow is analogous to day or conscious energy. On the religious level, we attune ourselves to divine guidance for our personal (soul) and collective development. We articulate this on the ideological level in terms of values, ideals, mythologies, world-views, etc. Legal codes are made to enforce these and people act these out in their behavior patterns. Our values, goals, etc., also influence the way we deal with nature and the means by which we obtain our economic needs. (i.e. Is nature a commodity for

exploitation and indiscriminate wealth or should we work with nature in limiting our wants, recycling our goods, farming organically, and matching our population to the environment?)

All of these different levels affect one another and one cannot ignore one level of reality without suffering harmful effects. They must function together in organic unity and not be fragmented into isolated, unrelated compartments. In looking toward solution to world problems today, this is especially important to remember because a problem at one level (i.e. poverty cannot be solved without reference to other levels (i.e. class society, power-elitism, unquestioned faith in scientific progress, etc.). There is work to be done at each of these levels.

For example, at the ecological level there is pollution, overpopulation, and resource depletion. At the economic level we are burdened by production for profit instead of needs and the maldistribution of wealth and income. At the cultural level we struggle with alienation, sexism, racism, lack of community and lack of trust. At the political level there is nationalism and militarism; at the ideological level, dogmatism and fanaticism; and at the religious level, cynicism and lack of faith.

The hope I have is that people are working to correct some of these evils and not contributing to them. The summary presented here is meant to facilitate a more holistic view and comprehensive understanding in moving toward a sane and healthy society.



Shopsteading

As public officials in cities both large and small across America know too well, few things lead to neighborhood decay faster than empty and boarded-up shops on central commercial strips. To the residents of these areas, the blighted properties are a symbol of neighborhood decline; to the city they represent revenue lost from the tax rolls.

Two Eastern cities are now experimenting with

programs to put these abandoned properties back into business. The programs in Baltimore, Md., and Jersey City, N.J., are called "Shopsteading," and they are modeled on the familiar urban homesteading idea. Under the program, commercially zoned abandoned properties acquired by the city through eminent domain or tax foreclosure are sold at nominal fees to businesspersons who agree to rehabilitate the building and open a business there.

In both cities, prospective buyers are required to submit detailed financial and personal information, as well as their plans for the property, before the sale is made. Both cities also require the businessperson to stick to a schedule for opening their shop. In Baltimore, if the shopsteader is unable to complete the required renovations in one year, the property is returned to the city. Once a business is open, the owners are required to operate the shop for a specified period of time--two years in Baltimore, five in Jersey City--before selling it.

For businesses, the advantages of shopsteading are clear: the advantages include technical assistance from the cities, access to local and federal low-interest loans and, most importantly, the opportunity to buy commercial property at low cost.

The advantages for cities are equally widespread. Shopsteading, by stabilizing neighborhoods, can stimulate additional investment--both public and private. Baltimore has added parking lots, new sidewalks and trees in its shopstead areas. New businesses have been attracted to Baltimore's shopstead neighborhoods and existing businesses in these areas have been encouraged to improve their properties.

Shopsteads can include a variety of establishments--everything from real estate offices to ice cream shops have been opened in Baltimore--but the success of the program requires its integration into an overall economic development plan. Successful shopsteading requires the careful assessment of the market for goods and services in the neighborhood of the proposed new store.

For more information on the Baltimore program contact: Kathleen Deasy, Shopsteading Coordinator, Office of Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization, Department of Housing and Community Development, 222 E. Saratoga St., Room 707, Baltimore, MD 21203 (301)396-3231.

Kimberton Hills

A Camphill Village

The Camphill Community, founded in 1940 by Karl Koenig, M.D. and based on the insights of Rudolf Steiner, took as its task the care of mentally handicapped children. Later the work expanded to include mentally handicapped adults. The Community has grown to include several thousand people over 40 communities of different kinds around the world including Kimberton Hills in Kimberton, Pennsylvania.

In 1972 Camphill Village USA, Inc., received as a gift the 350 acre property of Kimberton Hills. Its previous owners, the late Mr. and Mrs. Alaric Myrin, working in the 1940's with the late Dr. Ehrenfried Pfeiffer, had begun to develop the land according to the indications of Rudolf Steiner--the curative attitude of Biodynamic agriculture. This strong intention, so much in harmony with Camphill Philosophy, pervades the fertile farmland and woods and gives a particular configuration to the life of this special community.

As in all Camphill Villages, the life is based on family-type households in which "normal" families and their children live together with those who are retarded, giving scope to each individual's right to be different, but avoiding all unnecessary labels and distinctions. From the family group each person goes out daily to farm or garden, to another house for domestic duties, to maintenance of land or buildings. These tasks are carried out by small groups under guidance; the emphasis is on teamwork rather than individual excellence, on the responsible performance of needed work rather than on competitive attainment.

Development in the arts, including the art of living, leads to a strong cultural life, to new forms in architecture, a new appreciation of landscape. The celebration of festivals forms a major part of the life--both as a necessary rhythm in the work with the land and as part of the balanced growth of the human soul and spirit. Not only the four great seasonal festivals are emphasized but several others, and indeed an element of festival pervades the rhythm of day and week. Studies, folk dancing, films, music, drama, games, crafts and the arts constitute a broad sweep of recreation and adult education through the year. In this and in all parts of



the life, there is much exchange with the surrounding neighborhood.

The goal of Kimberton Hills is to be able to:

- Provide a secure home and working place for mentally retarded adults who wish to join after a trial period;
- Provide short-term working vacations and respite care for mentally retarded adults living at home or in other settings;
- Provide an intermediate step between institution and group-home or apartment living, for ex-residents of institutions who may need a secure, somewhat sheltered but non-institutional base from which to explore the competitive world;
- Provide a home for some people who wish to work in the locality but have social limitations precluding their living alone;
- Provide a focus for the immense goodwill of individuals and groups who wish to "serve the handicapped" in kind or by their work;
- Provide experience in the biodynamic approach to agriculture as pursued in community together with mentally retarded adults.

Many different settings are possible in which retarded and "normal" people can live together to mutual benefit. Kimberton Hills is interested in and hopes by advice and example to encourage the growth of many other such communities--in rural, suburban or even urban settings, in response to the needs and out of the initiatives of actual people.

For further information about Camphill Village and Kimberton Hills, write: Kimberton Hills, Box 155, Kimberton, PA 19442.



Readers Write

ABOUT COMMUNITY FOR SOUTH AFRICA

I have been given your name and address by my friend Clark Tibbits at the Celo Community, Burnsville, North Carolina, in response to my request for information about Quaker communities in the U. S. for possible inclusion in the South Africa Quaker News (SAQN). This idea grew out of a special interest group at Southern Africa Yearly Meeting at Gaborone, Botswana, in January, 1980, on "Economics and Non-violence" or alternatives to the affluent society. The publicity to be given to the communities would have no other purpose than to acquaint SAQN readers with such experiments in living, if I may call them that. It is all too clear to many of us that the acquisitive aspects of our so-called Western civilization catch on all too quickly and that an awareness of the trends, especially in the U. S. away from that acquisitiveness and back to a way of life more akin to that from which most Africans have sprung, might be salutary and a healthy deterrent to "jumping on the bandwagon" too blithely.

I shall be returning to Canada on leave from the National University of Lesotho where I work and wish that I would have more time to visit communities in the States but family commitments will probably rule this out. I plan to visit Celo and shall have to content myself with reading about others.

Alan Hutcheon, Lesotho, S. Africa



ABOUT STARTING A COMMUNITY

We are basing our association, Singing Waters, on the ideals of cooperation, faith, and fellowship. We call ours a spiritually-oriented farming community within the parameters of which folk may opt to live apart, cooperating only on major mutually agreed upon objectives. I guess we've taken democratic, spiritual, cooperative and Quakerly values for granted as our foundation cornerstones.

We searched, and researched, for several years before finding our chosen, south-facing valley in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mts. in north-western North Carolina. It does have great potential, but needs young fold (lots of energy!), for it is a gone-back-to-wild farm. But it's coming. We plan 5-acre homesteads and have room for 20 to 25 families. Several tracts are already spoken for. Members will be accepted only after visiting and working together for a spell.

For more information, write Singing Waters Assoc., Rt. 1, Box 143, Purtlear, NC 28665.

Mary Tomlin, North Carolina



ABOUT YOUR CONFERENCE

Notice of your Conference reminds us that we attended your Small Community Conference in 1947 when Dr. and Mrs. Morgan were just back from Finland and both Ernest and Griscom were on the program along with Dr. Hays of Vanderbilt and others.

That was one of the most helpful conferences we ever attended and we still quote things Dr. Morgan said that have been helpful all the years.

I was in Town and Country YMCA work in Waukesha County, Wisconsin, for 26 years, and that was a most stimulating conference helpful to me in many ways in my work in villages and rural communities.

Since retirement in 1956 we've lived in nine different states doing volunteer work in each one, enjoying small communities most of all.

Do have a good conference this year.

Elmer and Anna Lushbough, Baker, Montana

Book Reviews

CO-OPS, COMMUNES AND COLLECTIVES--Experiments in Social Change in the 1060's and 1970's. Edited by John Case and Rosemary C. R. Taylor, Pantheon Books, 1979, paper, \$5.95.

by Jane Folmer

The end of a decade is traditionally a time for looking back, categorizing and evaluating the recent past. Co-ops, Communes and Collectives assesses the impact of social change experiments which began in the 60's and were modified, absorbed or simply eliminated by the mainstream of society in the 70's. The eleven authors which are represented in this collection of essays point out the significance of the impact this process has made on those who participated and on the institutions that sought to repress them.

The first section of the book provides details of specific projects from the perspective of first-hand experience as well as an evaluation both of the methods and results of representative cases, including free clinics, free schools, city communes, and food co-ops. Persons currently planning or working with these kinds of alternative projects should find the accounts of their efforts valuable in avoiding the unnecessary repetition of common errors.

The second section consists of five essays which disagree as to the relative successes and failures of the alternative experiments' attempts to correct such basic underlying problems as the need for community, equality, democratic decision-making and more personalized services. They do agree, however, that although the energetic fervor and urgency of the 60's may not have had the revolutionary effect once hoped for, the people and the ideas have matured, and significant changes in attitude and structure have resulted from their challenge to mainstream society. The individuals and organizations which are quietly going about making changes may or may not be able to bring about a New Age, but the experience gained by those who have taken part will assure that needed tools are available as the challenges of the 80's present themselves.



AT THE CROSSROADS -- An Inquiry into Rural Post Offices and the Communities They Serve by Richard J. Margolis, U.S. Gov't Printing Office.

by Jane Folmer

The community post office is the subject of a recent study and report prepared for the U.S. Postal Rate Commission by Richard J. Margolis, a journalist-scholar specializing in rural affairs. The first of a series of research papers, AT THE CROSSROADS encourages consideration and appreciation of the special role post offices play in the communities they serve.

By visiting many small communities around the country and becoming attuned to the needs of the residents, the author was able to develop a strong case for the small, rural post office and the small community as well. He points out the significance of local institutions such as the post office and local school in the preservation of the identity and viability of small communities. In addition to mail service, the rural post office frequently serves as a focal point of sociability and intimacy, as a communications center, and as a neighbor and counselor.

Many small communities, having lost their post offices, have subsequently "disappeared from the face of the land." Margolis says of the post office what Jonathan P. Sher (EDUCATION IN RURAL AMERICA) says of the local school -- their demise may be a cause, rather than an effect, of rural community decline. Yet, since 1901, 47,000 post offices have been closed, most of them in rural communities.

We are reminded that "three-fourths of all non-metropolitan communities registered population gains between 1970-75 and...even the most remote rural areas showed net migration gains". This reversal of migration trends in recent years increases the need to re-evaluate policies and attitudes concerning small communities and their local institutions. This small book is an important step in that direction.

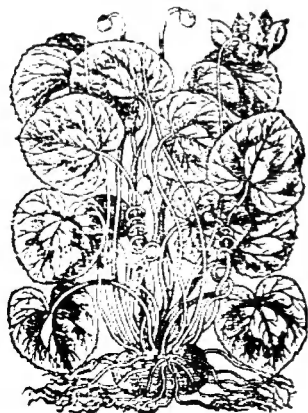
Copies of AT THE CROSSROADS may be obtained free of charge by writing the Public Information Office, Postal Rate Commission, Washington, D.C. 20268.



GROWING WITH COMMUNITY GARDENING by Mary Lee Coe, The Countryman Press, 149 pp., paper, 1978 \$6.95

by Nancy Delach

"As changes in contemporary society accelerate and multiply, the need for natural surroundings becomes increasingly important." Community gardens can provide the link between people and Nature. Even in urban settings, natural areas can be developed in the form of windowsill boxes, planters, and vacant lot gardens.



In this age of change and complexity, people tend to feel out of touch and out of control. This dehumanizing situation can be reversed by restoring a sense of order on a smaller, more manageable scale. What better examples of order and simplicity of form could one find than in observing Nature?

Mary Lee Coe has written Growing with Community Gardening for individuals interested in the relationship between people and Nature, specifically growing plants. Although small in size, this book is brimming with specific examples of community garden programs, their successes and failures, and an appendix of valuable information for both the community garden organizer and the backyard gardener.

The chapter on horticulture therapy is especially interesting. One wishes it was even longer, for it mentions studies on behavior modification of criminals and delinquents through gardening.

The heart of the book includes the case histories of three community garden programs, two urban and one rural. The scope of Mary Coe's choices is

extremely valuable because it demonstrates the vastly different alternatives that are possible and the mishaps and successes that each one encounters. This reviewer found herself alternately delighted, furious, and incredulous in the ingenuity and ineptness of program planners. These chapters should become recommended reading for anyone involved in developing a community garden program, whether that person is a government official, a garden supervisor, or a participant.

The latter half of the book gives a step-by-step procedure for the organization of a community garden from finding a sponsor and coordinator to enrolling and communicating with members.

There are samples of budgets, contracts, and rules from existing community garden programs. Mary Coe gives excellent attention to details without missing the whole view, producing a lucid, informative procedure.

The appendix is a wealth of information including a monthly activities checklist for a gardening program, a table of the nutritive values of various vegetables, plant pests and repellent plants for organic gardening, and more.

Mary Coe's combination of investigative reporting, personal experiences, and concise directions create a book that is both entertaining and educational reading.



Announcements

BURNETTE'S ARAUCANA FARM

One of our members has need of additional people to live and work on his rather unusual farm. He has a large variety of fowl, including peacocks, pharaoh quail, and oriental pheasants; plus deer, rheas, goats and sheep. He is looking for dedicated, determined people with some experience in organic farming, animal husbandry, bee-keeping and carpentry. For more information, write: Jim Burnette, Araucana Farm, 6940 Columbia Rd., Olmsted Falls, OH 44138; or call (216) 235-4050.

INTENTIONAL LIVING IN A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

The church is a community of believers, a community that forms in many settings. Thus community-building is a part of every Kanuga conference. At one program, however, community-building is the sole purpose for gathering. This is INTENTIONAL LIVING IN A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY, to be held August 16-22 at Camp Kanuga of the Kanuga Episcopal Center in Hendersonville, North Carolina.

The basic goal of the program is to learn from each other what compassionate living means in the context of Christian community. Individuals and families are equally welcome. In a week devoted to simple, thoughtful living, everyone will have time for work, play, worship and reflection, recreation and community time.

The setting is a very special one, for this is the only conference-type program which uses Kanuga's summer camp which has its own lake for swimming and boating. Nearby hiking trails lead to mountain overlooks, including Wolf Mountain, where last year's community built a shelter overlooking a peaceful valley. Because participants share cooking and housekeeping chores, the cost is low: \$100 for adults, \$75 for persons ages 3-15, and no charge for age 2 and under. This fee covers room and board and the week-long program.

For further information write: Kanuga, P. O. Drawer 250, Hendersonville, NC 28739 or call: 704/692-9136.

EDITOR'S NOTE

We not only welcome letters to the editor, but articles about any exceptional communities you know of or people who are doing unusual things to improve the life in their towns. Anyone submitting an article should enclose a self-addressed envelope if he/she wishes it returned if we cannot use it. The only recompense for use we can offer is the pleasure of seeing it in print and knowing that you have spread a good and useful idea.

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND?

Do you have a friend who might be interested in Community Service's work and publications? One of the most helpful ways of supporting CS is to send the names and addresses of friends who you think should receive a sample of our NEWSLETTER and a copy of our booklist. If you wish a specific issue of our NEWSLETTER sent to your friends, please send 15¢ postage per name.

MEMBERSHIP is a means of supporting and sharing the work of Community Service. Though a minimum \$10 annual contribution includes a subscription to our NEWSLETTER, larger contributions are needed. COMMUNITY SERVICE, INC. is a non-profit corporation which depends on contributions so that it can offer its services freely to those who need them. All contributions are appreciated, needed and are TAX DEDUCTIBLE. If you want your NEWSLETTER sent airmail overseas, please send \$16.00. All foreign members including Canadian please pay in U.S. currency.

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If there are errors on your mailing label or in our billing, please send the old label, plus corrections, and the facts of prior billing to us. It will save time and money if you will let us know by postcard of your change of address. The post office charges us 25¢ to inform us of each change and you may not be receiving your NEWSLETTER. We then have to pay 15¢ to remail your NEWSLETTER. Sometimes the post office says there is no forwarding address for a subscriber and this makes us sad. So PLEASE SEND US YOUR OLD ADDRESS AND YOUR NEW ADDRESS.

CONSULTATION

Community Service makes no set charge for consultation services formal or informal, but can only serve through contributions of its friends and those it helps. For consultation we suggest a minimum contribution equal to that of the consulter's hourly wage for an hour of our time.

TRUSTEES

Frances Ashley, Ross Morgan, Phyllis Cannon, Howard Cort, Cyndde and James DeWeese, Griscom Morgan, Virginia Hofmann, Connie Bauer, Jane and Paul Hoover, Morris Milgram, Ed Dressler, Clark Tibbets, John Morgan and Donald Brezine, president.

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